

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE
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JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE COMMISSION ISSUES
PUBLIC ADMONISHMENT OF JUDGE ANTHONY C. EDWARDS

The Commission on Judicial Performance has publicly admonished Judge Anthony C. Edwards of the Trinity County Superior Court.

Judge Edwards was publicly admonished for cancelling the services of a court reporter who had been retained to cover the courtroom of Trinity County Superior Court's other judge, Judge James Woodward. Judge Edwards was presiding judge at the time. Judge Woodward's regular court reporter was to be on vacation on July 19, 2010, when Judge Woodward had three preliminary examinations and three other felony matters scheduled for hearing. He had directed his regular court reporter to make arrangements for another court reporter to be present. Judge Edwards informed Judge Woodward by email that he saw no need for Judge Woodward to have a court reporter on that date and said he would have the reporter called off if he did not hear from Judge Woodward. Judge Woodward responded by email that he had a number of matters set on July 19th that required a reporter, including the preliminary hearings. Nonetheless, Judge Edwards cancelled the court reporter who was to cover Judge Woodward's court on that date.

The commission's decision noted the various statutes requiring that a court reporter record proceedings in felony cases on the order of the court or at the request of the prosecution, the defendant or the defense counsel and, with respect to preliminary hearings, permitting the court to appoint a court reporter in the absence of a request by the parties. The decision also noted that the local rules in Trinity County require that proceedings in felony cases be reported.

Judge Edwards contended that his cancellation of the court reporter was necessitated by his responsibility as presiding judge to actively manage the court's financial situation and that he cancelled the court reporter in an effort to prompt Judge Woodward to engage in a dialogue about court expenses. The commission rejected both contentions. The responsibility of presiding judges for management of the court "does not extend to intruding on another judge's case-related authority by countermanding that judge's case-related orders." The purported desire to prompt a dialogue about expenses "was not a valid justification for cancellation of the court reporter in Judge Woodward's cases and was for a purpose other than the faithful discharge of judicial duties."

In determining to issue a public admonishment, the commission noted Judge Edwards's receipt of a public admonishment in April 2010, shortly before the conduct in this matter, for conduct that included dismissing certain infractions and misdemeanors on the basis that the defendants lived in Hayfork and were cited to appear in Weaverville, and threatening to do so in all cases. There was no court order or legal requirement that a Hayfork resident's initial court appearance be in Hayfork.

The public admonishment is available on the commission's Website at www.cjp.ca.gov (under "Press Releases" and "Public Discipline – 1960 to Present") and from the commission's office.

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The commission is composed of three judges, two lawyers, and six public members. The Chairperson is the Hon. Judith D. McConnell of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, in San Diego, California.

For further information about the Commission on Judicial Performance, see the commission's Web site.